

Pap. & March 29th 1826
W. L. A.

An Essay, on
Rheumatism
by
Jacob Glatz
of
Maricetta
Lancaster County
Pennsylvania.

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H. P. M.
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It can scarcely be expected that much new matter can be advanced relating to a disease like Rheumatism. The principal object of this essay is therefore to offer, in some form, a few of the best opinions which have been advanced on the subject, together with some observations of my own, and to advert to some of the best known remedies for a disease, which, in spite of our extensive resources, often baffles the skill of the most experienced.

Of Acute Rheumatism.

Rheumatism, in its acute stage or form, is as much a part of the Phlogiasis, a purely inflammatory disease, but in its nature, appears to be sui generis, differing in its leading characteristics from the genuine Phlogmonous inflammation, and still more from the Erysipelatous, although like this latter, the only favourable termination is that of resolution.

The principal difference between Rheumatism

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is the two species of inflammation above specified, appears to be, that the Rheumatic, is always seated in the fibrous structures of the body; as the peritoneum, dura mater, the muscular coats of the tubes, and fibres of the body generally. It is somewhat partial in its place of location, being found mostly to affect the larger joints, and those parts but sparingly covered with muscle. Perhaps the want of this natural covering rendering them more liable to exposure; or these joints from their frequent motion; are, along with the other causes of debility, rendered more prone to take on the disease.

We also find that inflammation differs much in regards its seat in the different tissues; and thus the same disease may produce different appearances, symptoms &c. as seated in different tissues. We see too that the effects of medicines, many of which act by producing irritation

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inflammation, on these tissues, is as different; - for *Spicacuanha* or *Antimony* introduced into the cellular membrane of the thigh or arm, will produce very different effects from what they will when applied to the mucous tissues; and it may be in this manner many of our medicines act specifically. The same exciting causes would probably in a young and vigorous constitution, unimpaired by previous disease, or an intemperate life produce a healthy phlogogenic inflammation, or inflammatory fever; while in a person of advanced years and whose constitution has been battered by a dissolute and debauched life, or continued hardships and privations, we would have that peculiar inflammation denominated *Rheumatic*, affecting the fibrous structures, and perhaps at times the heads of the bones. Where there exists a predisposition, (and it is thought by some to be hereditary,) *Rheumatic*

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The symptoms of Acute Rheumatism are, pain in one or more of the joints, sometimes affecting every joint and part of the body, obliging the patient to lie on his back with his limbs extended, and incapable of moving them or having moved without excruciating pain. In violent cases of this kind we generally see fever from the commencement of the attack, with a full, frequent and hard pulse, even in the emaciated. The fever is generally highest in the evening, and a remission takes place in the morning, the patient being often much relieved by a universal sweat. The urine is high coloured, and deposits a copious sediment. Through the day he is less troubled with paining which however are more or less severe according to the state of the weather. After they have

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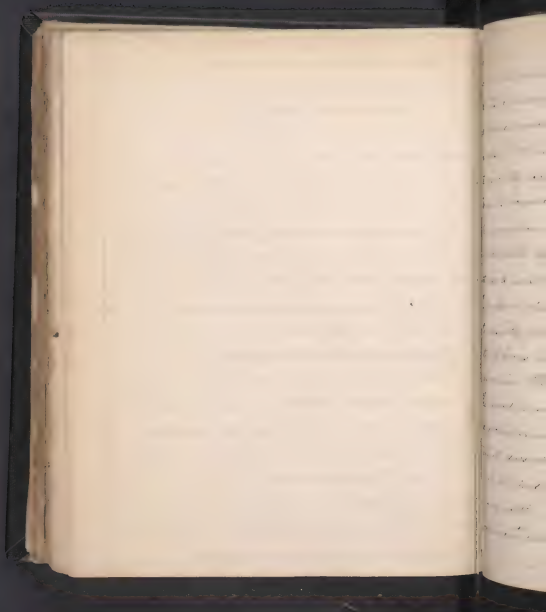
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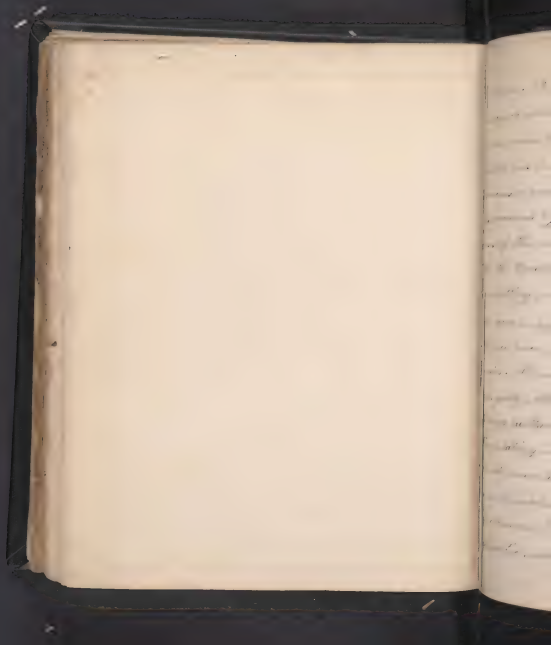
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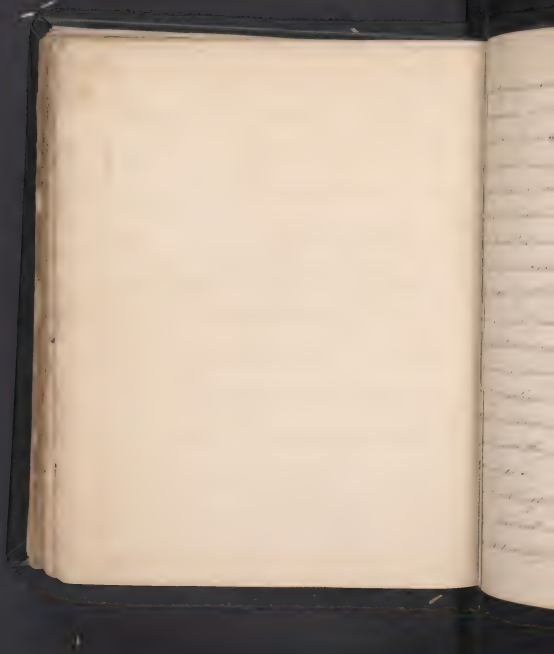
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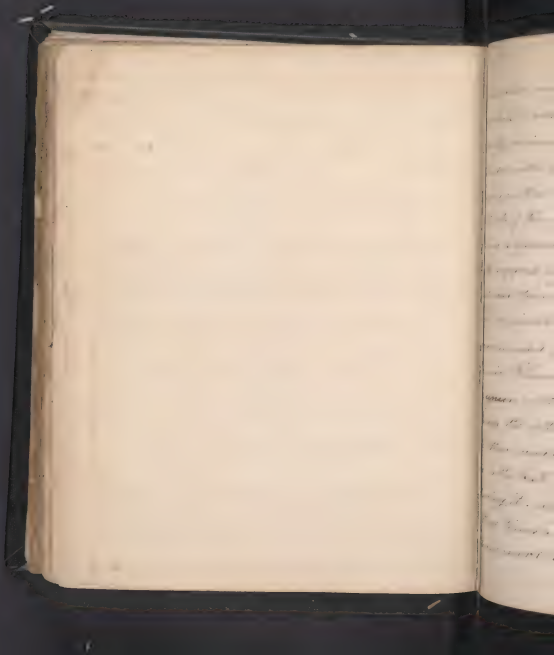


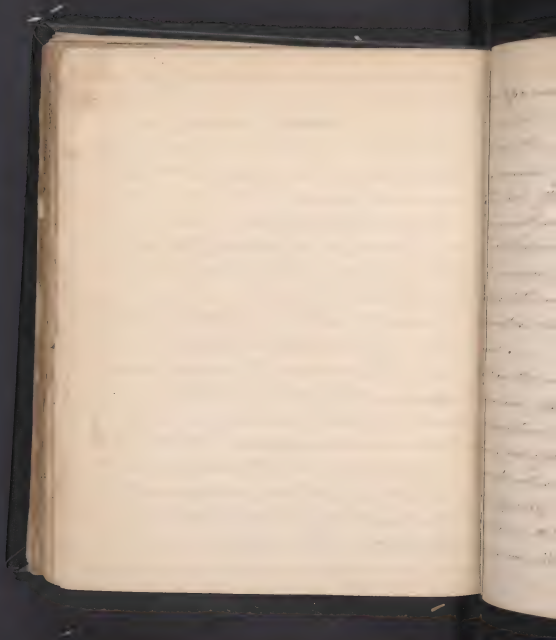
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If the former symptoms: the pulse becomes more frequent and hard, and the blood exhibits an inflammatory appearance. This although generally thought to indicate a continuance of coagulation, should not be too much relied upon; for several other circumstances may combine to retard the coagulation of the blood, upon the success of which the formation of the buffy coat will depend. Small and repeated bleeding will be necessary so long as the pulse remains hard, and patients strength will bear them.

When Chronic Rheumatism proves very obstinate, we may try the effects of putting the system under an alterative treatment of mercury, or we may even touch the gums, and the system should be kept under the effects of it for some time, as this will often succeed when other remedies have failed.

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The use of savin is said to be effectual where there are earthy depositions.

The diet, in common cases, should be nourishing and easy of digestion.

Sea-bathing; moderate exercise; and an occasional use of bitters and tonics should also be recommended. —